



THE MILLIONAIRE GIRL

Or the Parmenter Millions

(Copyright, 1907, by Arthur W. Marchmont)

By ARTHUR W. MARCHMONT,
Author of "By Right of Sword," "When I Was Czar," Etc.

at the station here and befriended her. For aught to the contrary, Richard Parmenter, the old woman, Tisley, was telling the truth, and when the doctors certified that she was insane, what could I do? Bring the woman here and the rest of the people? I suppose a lawyer like Mr. Matthews can be found easily, and they will only bear out what I say. I wish now I had let the thing take its course."

"You will wish that often enough before you have heard the last of it, madam," said Jack, furiously. But Mr. Casement quieted him, and said: "The matter will of course be thoroughly investigated," he said. "There is the serious point as to the false telegrams, and the bogus specialist."

"I can only say that I will do all in my power to assist you," was the reply spoken with unruffled calmness. "I was completely deceived."

And despite his utmost efforts, Mr. Casement could do no more. The supposed lawyer, the bogus specialist—by whom Dr. Larkhall had been entirely hoodwinked and the woman, Tisley, and even the people who had reproached themselves as running the lodging house, had disappeared and could not be traced.

That it had all been concocted by Mrs. Merriwell, neither Jack nor the lawyer had the least doubt. She had known Olive was coming to Sheffield, and had made her preparations well in advance. But it had all been done so cleverly that her part in it had been completely hidden, and when the others were spirited away there was absolutely no proof of her handiwork.

"They had, therefore, to accept defeat for the time, leaving the affair in the hands of Mr. Ringrose. Nor was there any better result in regard to the attack in the railway carriage. The railway authorities did their utmost to find the man, but without result; and the case was added to the

number of undiscovered railway mysteries.

The knowledge that her father's name was cleared from the old charge of crime put such heart into Olive, however, that she was virtually indifferent to the other failure.

Her implicit faith in his honor had been splendidly vindicated; and it was with a light heart that she set to work to disprove the story of that old marriage, on the truth of falsehood of which her good name and her right to her father's millions depended.

CHAPTER XIV.
An Adventure in London.

"I am more confident than ever that it is all a falsehood," declared Olive to her two champions, speaking of the alleged marriage between her father and Mrs. Merriwell.

But in this she was doomed to a bitter disappointment.

The two witnesses to the marriage were seen, and they turned out to be persons of comparatively humble position, but of unquestionable respectability. They remembered the ceremony; they had recognized Mrs. Merriwell; and when a portrait of Mr. Parmenter was shown to them, both agreed that, allowing for the years which had elapsed between the marriage and the date when the photograph was taken, it was the likeness of the man who had married her.

The registrar who had performed the marriage was dead, but the signature in the books was certainly that of Olive's father. Even Mr. Casement could not dispute that. In a word, the proofs were indisputable.

"I am deeply sorry," Olive commented, Mr. Casement, "but you could not find half a dozen people in the whole kingdom to believe that that marriage did not take place."

"I know of one," said Olive. "I will never believe it," declared Jack. "And here he stands. I'll never believe those Merriwells haven't faked it somehow."

"I am accustomed to weigh evidence," was the lawyer's reply. "I have no wish to discourage you, my

dear; but I won't buoy you up with false hopes."

"Nothing will discourage me," replied Olive. "I trust my instincts. And I am as resolved as ever to go on with my task until I know the truth," she added, confidently.

In this mood they returned first to Frampton, Olive having announced her determination to go to London.

Both men attempted to dissuade her from this, Jack urging her again and again to marry him.

"Think of the danger you have already run," he said. "It is not safe for you to think of attempting all this alone."

"I don't care what the danger is, Jack. I will not be frightened off. Besides, I have had a lesson. I know something of the people I am pitted against now, and shall be cautious. But if I am to lose even my life, I will not give up. I shall take care that they do not know where I am to be found. But I shall go to London; I'll go to the end of the world if necessary; but give up, I will not."

"I'm in town; that's one blessing," he said. "But where shall you live?"

About that Mr. Casement had a suggestion. "A young friend of mine named Robson, son of an old client, fell in love with a detective's life, and is now an inspector. He has a dear little wife, and if you care to go to him, not only would you be perfectly safe, but he is a shrewd fellow, and might help you."

"Wait a minute," cried Jack. "Why not go to Mrs. Taunton in such an emergency? She would be delighted to have you, Olive."

But Olive replied she would rather see something of Mrs. Taunton before going to stay at her house, and decided, therefore, to accept Mr. Casement's suggestion. A day or so sufficed to make the necessary arrangements.

She persisted in her story, none the less for this, and in the end the second constable declared he would arrest her as well. Boiling with anger and indignation, she was marched off to the station in company with the girl whose violent sobbing drew general attention to them both.

At the station, just as the girl, who gave the name of Selma Hammond, was about to be charged, Inspector Robson entered. It was a most fortunate chance. Olive told him what had happened, and after a very short delay, the two girls were released and the constables severely reprimanded.

Selma Hammond was a tall, slight, rather delicate looking girl and shed tears of gratitude as she thanked windows of one of the big shops.

Then to her amazement, she saw him thrust his hand into the pocket of a richly-gowned woman, take out a purse and slip away with it. The theft was instantly discovered and the lady, turning round quickly, accused a girl who was standing behind her of having picked her pocket. The girl, pale and thin and delicate looking, protested her innocence and began to sob bitterly. A policeman was soon on the spot and in a moment the girl was in custody.

Taking fire at this flagrant injustice, Olive stepped forward and explained that she had seen the whole thing; that the girl had had nothing to do with the theft, which had been committed by a man who had run off. The constable was either a fool, or wishful to make a charge, however, and told Olive to be off about her business. A second constable came up, and when the matter was told to him, he accepted his fellow's story and added to it that he knew Olive well by sight and had often suspected her of pocket picking.

She persisted in her story, none the less for this, and in the end the second constable declared he would arrest her as well. Boiling with anger and indignation, she was marched off to the station in company with the girl whose violent sobbing drew general attention to them both.

At the station, just as the girl, who gave the name of Selma Hammond, was about to be charged, Inspector Robson entered. It was a most fortunate chance. Olive told him what had happened, and after a very short delay, the two girls were released and the constables severely reprimanded.

Selma Hammond was a tall, slight, rather delicate looking girl and shed tears of gratitude as she thanked windows of one of the big shops.

Then to her amazement, she saw him thrust his hand into the pocket of a richly-gowned woman, take out a purse and slip away with it. The theft was instantly discovered and the lady, turning round quickly, accused a girl who was standing behind her of having picked her pocket. The girl, pale and thin and delicate looking, protested her innocence and began to sob bitterly. A policeman was soon on the spot and in a moment the girl was in custody.

Taking fire at this flagrant injustice, Olive stepped forward and explained that she had seen the whole thing; that the girl had had nothing to do with the theft, which had been committed by a man who had run off. The constable was either a fool, or wishful to make a charge, however, and told Olive to be off about her business. A second constable came up, and when the matter was told to him, he accepted his fellow's story and added to it that he knew Olive well by sight and had often suspected her of pocket picking.

before, as she thrust out her hand and gripped Olive's. "My; but where were you raised?"

"I was born in South America; my mother came originally from the United States—Missouri."

"My, but that's great! Sakes alive, but I'm not real glad," continued Olive, seeing that her companion was interested enough to forget her own troubles for the moment. "He married my mother in the Argentine and had cattle and land and things."

"And made a pile, I guess. I've heard it's a wonderful place."

"Yes, he was rich."

"You don't say. And do you rich girls on this side go about alone like this?"

"I am not rich now," and as they walked, Olive went on to speak of the blue dyes clouded again. "Would you care to hear it? My room is close here. Will you come and see? We can talk better there than in the street."

Not saying much heed to the direction in which they were going, Olive and her companion had crossed Oxford Street, passed along Tottenham Court Road, and were now close to Mornington Crescent in the Hampstead Road.

Her companion stopped at one of the houses in a very quiet street, and repeated the invitation.

Olive hesitated about accepting. Her landlady, Inspector Robson, had warned her about the dangers of London, and her first inclination was to refuse. But Selma interested her deeply, and her instincts assured her that there was no harm in her; so she changed her mind and entered the house.

Afterwards she often recalled that momentary hesitation, and when thinking over all the momentous results that followed from the visit, speculated curiously about the difference it would have made in her life had she not conquered that first disinclination.

They went up to the front room on the second floor—a bed-sitting-room, in the language of lodging-housekeepers. It was scrupulously clean and tidy, plainly furnished with the ugliest of carpets, and almost absolutely devoid of ornaments. A small tray with tea was ready on the table in the window, and close to it, swept out of the way to make room for the tray, were a couple of photographs in cheap gilt frames.

"Better than Chicago, anyway," said Selma, noting Olive's glance around. "But I reckon they ought to go one better still. Guess they'll have to, too," she added as she threw her hat on the bed. "I'm getting wise again on this side, you see."

Olive sat down at the table. "Why, you're quite English. Afternoon tea?"

"I kind of cotton to it. Guess I'll ask Mrs. Braider for another cup. She's the boss here," and she rose to call to the landlady.

"May I look at these?" asked Olive, taking up the photographs.

"I guess you may that. They'll come in the story," was the reply as she went out of the room.

Olive picked them up and glanced idly at the first one. Then she started violently and uttered an involuntary cry.

It was a likeness of Gilbert Merriwell.

In a fever of sudden excitement she snatched up the other. It was the face of Mrs. Merriwell.

In sudden fear she rose, feeling the color had left her cheeks.

Had she fallen into another trap? She turned to hurry from the room at once, and then Selma Hammond came back, shutting the door behind her.

"Let me go. Let me go at once," cried Olive, wildly, facing her companion, who stood blocking her escape.

"How brave you are. I could not have done it. I should have run away. How can I ever thank you? Oh, how I wish you were my friend!"

The cry appeared to come from a weary heart and touched Olive. The girl seemed to be almost as lonely as she herself felt. "Are you alone, then?" she asked.

"I am alone in the world," was the desolate reply. "I only came over from Chicago a week or two ago. I was in jail there."

Olive was startled and looked at her closely. "In jail," she echoed. "For what?"

"If I was to tell you, you wouldn't believe me. No one ever believes me. I'm just a sort of no-account fool that ought never to have been born. It was for stealing; but I'm no thief. I haven't the pluck for one thing."

"Tell me," said Olive, kindly.

Selma laughed, a harsh, so eloquent of utter desolation that it drew a sigh from Olive. "Oh, I was just getting wise to their plans, so they had me jailed, while they cleared. I was up against it all right, all right. I thought it was another shine of the same sort to-day. Only that time in Chicago they planted the goods on me. It was done O. K."

"I don't understand all you say," answered Olive; "and perhaps you had better not tell me any more."

The girl had large, weak blue eyes, and she turned them now on Olive with a feeble expression. "Reckon you're about skeered of me a bit. But I ain't bad. I'm white enough, as white counts in Chicago. Some day I'd like to tell you. Not that you'd care, though, of course."

"How do you live?" asked Olive, interested in spite of herself.

"Reckon I don't live, just am. That's me. Never had a chance to live. Not that I'm such a big fool as I look. But my luck's panned out. Never had thirty cents' worth all my life."

"I am half an American," said Olive, rather at a loss what to say.

"You don't say. Guess we'll shake on that," and there was more life in the fishy eyes than at any time

before, as she thrust out her hand and gripped Olive's. "My; but where were you raised?"

"I was born in South America; my mother came originally from the United States—Missouri."

"My, but that's great! Sakes alive, but I'm not real glad," continued Olive, seeing that her companion was interested enough to forget her own troubles for the moment. "He married my mother in the Argentine and had cattle and land and things."

"And made a pile, I guess. I've heard it's a wonderful place."

"Yes, he was rich."

"You don't say. And do you rich girls on this side go about alone like this?"

Synopsis of Preceding Chapters.

Olive Parmenter, heiress to Gregory Parmenter's millions, is engaged to the future Lord Belborough, of Oxfordshire, Eng. Her father, after receiving a mysterious cablegram from America, insists that the marriage be hastened. No objection is made. Lady Belborough takes the occasion to insist the girl and is rebuked by her husband, Lord Belborough. The wedding is interrupted dramatically by a strange woman in black, who cries, "I forbid the banquet." Old Mr. Parmenter falls dead from the shock, and it is later discovered that his will has been stolen by leaving Olive penniless. The woman in black substantiates her claim to be the widow of Gregory Parmenter, and with her son, Gilbert Merriwell, takes possession of the Gregory estate. Merriwell calls on Mr. Parmenter's old lawyer, Mr. Casement, who suspects Merriwell of having stolen the will.

Chapter XIII.—Continued.

"I am the Hon. John Fenwick, the son of Lord Belborough," explained Jack. "Some terrible mistake, or worse, has been made in regard to this lady, whom I know perfectly well. She tells me they are taking her to a lunatic asylum, and she is about the sanest of the lot of us."

"I cannot keep the train waiting," was the reply.

"Then we'll all get out, and the matter can be settled. But if they stay in, I stay, and the thing can be gone into at the next stop."

"This is an outrage!" declared the doctor furiously.

"I remember now," said the station master, "I telegraphed to you two days ago at this young lady's request at Belborough Castle."

"I had no telegram. I was in London."

"You had better all get out," was the reply. "You can't stay, and the matter can be settled. But if they stay in, I stay, and the thing can be gone into at the next stop."

"That's all I want," said Jack, and when the others had alighted he followed.

They went into the waiting room, and then the doctor explained to Jack what had been done, and that Sir Anthony Browlick had certified with himself.

"Oh, that's rot!" said Jack. "Sir Anthony is an old friend of my father's and is now at Belborough."

"That is not possible, sir."

At that Jack lost the remnant of his temper. "Look here, if you give me the lie on a matter of fact, I'll throw you through the window. You are either a fool or have been made a fool of; or you are an unprincipled scoundrel and deserve all that is coming to you. Write to Sir Anthony to his London house and ask him if he was in Sheffield yesterday."

It was a happy suggestion, and when the doctor, who was now rather frightened, went out to telegraph, Olive described to her lover all that had passed.

The recital had put him in a furious passion. "Clear out of this, Dr. Larkhall," he said, fiercely, when the doctor returned. "or I shall be able to keep my hands off you. That's the truth. And now," he added to Olive, when the doctor had gone, "We'll have a solicitor in."

He saw the station-master, and having told him as much as was necessary, asked him for the name of a lawyer. He mentioned Mr. Ringrose, and without telling Olive the name, Jack rang the lawyer up on the telephone and got him to come at once.

When Olive heard he was coming she was a little startled, but Mr. Ringrose did not recognize her name, and proved to be a shrewd, sharp-witted fellow, who very quickly arranged matters. A message from the great London specialist's house that he was at Belborough Castle cleared the air. Then it turned out that Mr. Ringrose knew Mr. Casement and he made the very welcome suggestion that Olive should spend the night at his house and that Mr. Casement should be wired to come down on the morrow.

Jack, whose fingers were itching to hit somebody, had five minutes heated conversation with Dr. Larkhall. The latter professed the greatest willingness to do all he could to help in settling matters right; but Jack contemptuously sent him about his business with the curt reminder that no fools were needed, and that he had already done more than enough mischief.

Mr. Casement arrived the next morning, and while he and Jack were hunting up the people who had been concerned in the conspiracy against Olive, she asked Mr. Ringrose to tell her the facts about her father's connection with the firm. "I don't remember the name," he said. "Perhaps my father may. He has retired from the firm. We will go and ask him. Mr. Casement has told me much of your very story, Miss Parmenter; and if I can do anything to help you, by all means command me," he said very kindly.

The old man remembered it immediately. "It is that old Purvis affair, Bob," he said; "You can go back to the office and I'll tell Miss Parmenter all about it. I am only too glad to have the chance," he added to Olive.

"Bless my soul, it must be twenty or



"I will give you one more chance of contradicting your story," he said.

number of undiscovered railway mysteries.

The knowledge that her father's name was cleared from the old charge of crime put such heart into Olive, however, that she was virtually indifferent to the other failure.

Her implicit faith in his honor had been splendidly vindicated; and it was with a light heart that she set to work to disprove the story of that old marriage, on the truth of falsehood of which her good name and her right to her father's millions depended.

CHAPTER XIV.
An Adventure in London.

"I am more confident than ever that it is all a falsehood," declared Olive to her two champions, speaking of the alleged marriage between her father and Mrs. Merriwell.

But in this she was doomed to a bitter disappointment.

The two witnesses to the marriage were seen, and they turned out to be persons of comparatively humble position, but of unquestionable respectability. They remembered the ceremony; they had recognized Mrs. Merriwell; and when a portrait of Mr. Parmenter was shown to them, both agreed that, allowing for the years which had elapsed between the marriage and the date when the photograph was taken, it was the likeness of the man who had married her.

The registrar who had performed the marriage was dead, but the signature in the books was certainly that of Olive's father. Even Mr. Casement could not dispute that. In a word, the proofs were indisputable.

"I am deeply sorry," Olive commented, Mr. Casement, "but you could not find half a dozen people in the whole kingdom to believe that that marriage did not take place."

"I know of one," said Olive. "I will never believe it," declared Jack. "And here he stands. I'll never believe those Merriwells haven't faked it somehow."

"I am accustomed to weigh evidence," was the lawyer's reply. "I have no wish to discourage you, my

dear; but I won't buoy you up with false hopes."

"Nothing will discourage me," replied Olive. "I trust my instincts. And I am as resolved as ever to go on with my task until I know the truth," she added, confidently.

In this mood they returned first to Frampton, Olive having announced her determination to go to London.

Both men attempted to dissuade her from this, Jack urging her again and again to marry him.

"Think of the danger you have already run," he said. "It is not safe for you to think of attempting all this alone."

"I don't care what the danger is, Jack. I will not be frightened off. Besides, I have had a lesson. I know something of the people I am pitted against now, and shall be cautious. But if I am to lose even my life, I will not give up. I shall take care that they do not know where I am to be found. But I shall go to London; I'll go to the end of the world if necessary; but give up, I will not."

"I'm in town; that's one blessing," he said. "But where shall you live?"

About that Mr. Casement had a suggestion. "A young friend of mine named Robson, son of an old client, fell in love with a detective's life, and is now an inspector. He has a dear little wife, and if you care to go to him, not only would you be perfectly safe, but he is a shrewd fellow, and might help you."

"Wait a minute," cried Jack. "Why not go to Mrs. Taunton in such an emergency? She would be delighted to have you, Olive."

But Olive replied she would rather see something of Mrs. Taunton before going to stay at her house, and decided, therefore, to accept Mr. Casement's suggestion. A day or so sufficed to make the necessary arrangements.

She persisted in her story, none the less for this, and in the end the second constable declared he would arrest her as well. Boiling with anger and indignation, she was marched off to the station in company with the girl whose violent sobbing drew general attention to them both.

At the station, just as the girl, who gave the name of Selma Hammond, was about to be charged, Inspector Robson entered. It was a most fortunate chance. Olive told him what had happened, and after a very short delay, the two girls were released and the constables severely reprimanded.

Selma Hammond was a tall, slight, rather delicate looking girl and shed tears of gratitude as she thanked windows of one of the big shops.

Then to her amazement, she saw him thrust his hand into the pocket of a richly-gowned woman, take out a purse and slip away with it. The theft was instantly discovered and the lady, turning round quickly, accused a girl who was standing behind her of having picked her pocket. The girl, pale and thin and delicate looking, protested her innocence and began to sob bitterly. A policeman was soon on the spot and in a moment the girl was in custody.

Taking fire at this flagrant injustice, Olive stepped forward and explained that she had seen the whole thing; that the girl had had nothing to do with the theft, which had been committed by a man who had run off. The constable was either a fool, or wishful to make a charge, however, and told Olive to be off about her business. A second constable came up, and when the matter was told to him, he accepted his fellow's story and added to it that he knew Olive well by sight and had often suspected her of pocket picking.

She persisted in her story, none the less for this, and in the end the second constable declared he would arrest her as well. Boiling with anger and indignation, she was marched off to the station in company with the girl whose violent sobbing drew general attention to them both.

At the station, just as the girl, who gave the name of Selma Hammond, was about to be charged, Inspector Robson entered. It was a most fortunate chance. Olive told him what had happened, and after a very short delay, the two girls were released and the constables severely reprimanded.

Selma Hammond was a tall, slight, rather delicate looking girl and shed tears of gratitude as she thanked windows of one of the big shops.

Then to her amazement, she saw him thrust his hand into the pocket of a richly-gowned woman, take out a purse and slip away with it. The theft was instantly discovered and the lady, turning round quickly, accused a girl who was standing behind her of having picked her pocket. The girl, pale and thin and delicate looking, protested her innocence and began to sob bitterly. A policeman was soon on the spot and in a moment the girl was in custody.

Taking fire at this flagrant injustice, Olive stepped forward and explained that she had seen the whole thing; that the girl had had nothing to do with the theft, which had been committed by a man who had run off. The constable was either a fool, or wishful to make a charge, however, and told Olive to be off about her business. A second constable came up, and when the matter was told to him, he accepted his fellow's story and added to it that he knew Olive well by sight and had often suspected her of pocket picking.

She persisted in her story, none the less for this, and in the end the second constable declared he would arrest her as well. Boiling with anger and indignation, she was marched off to the station in company with the girl whose violent sobbing drew general attention to them both.

At the station, just as the girl, who gave the name of Selma Hammond, was about to be charged, Inspector Robson entered. It was a most fortunate chance. Olive told him what had happened, and after a very short delay, the two girls were released and the constables severely reprimanded.

Selma Hammond was a tall, slight, rather delicate looking girl and shed tears of gratitude as she thanked windows of one of the big shops.

Then to her amazement, she saw him thrust his hand into the pocket of a richly-gowned woman, take out a purse and slip away with it. The theft was instantly discovered and the lady, turning round quickly, accused a girl who was standing behind her of having picked her pocket. The girl, pale and thin and delicate looking, protested her innocence and began to sob bitterly. A policeman was soon on the spot and in a moment the girl was in custody.

Taking fire at this flagrant injustice, Olive stepped forward and explained that she had seen the whole thing; that the girl had had nothing to do with the theft, which had been committed by a man who had run off. The constable was either a fool, or wishful to make a charge, however, and told Olive to be off about her business. A second constable came up, and when the matter was told to him, he accepted his fellow's story and added to it that he knew Olive well by sight and had often suspected her of pocket picking.

She persisted in her story, none the less for this, and in the end the second constable declared he would arrest her as well. Boiling with anger and indignation, she was marched off to the station in company with the girl whose violent sobbing drew general attention to them both.

At the station, just as the girl, who gave the name of Selma Hammond, was about to be charged, Inspector Robson entered. It was a most fortunate chance. Olive told him what had happened, and after a very short delay, the two girls were released and the constables severely reprimanded.

Selma Hammond was a tall, slight, rather delicate looking girl and shed tears of gratitude as she thanked windows of one of the big shops.

Then to her amazement, she saw him thrust his hand into the pocket of a richly-gowned woman, take out a purse and slip away with it. The theft was instantly discovered and the lady, turning round quickly, accused a girl who was standing behind her of having picked her pocket. The girl, pale and thin and delicate looking, protested her innocence and began to sob bitterly. A policeman was soon on the spot and in a moment the girl was in custody.